

NEWS

For Immediate Release

**United States
Department
of Agriculture**

Forest Service

Cibola National Forest
Sandia Ranger District
11776 Hwy. 337
Tijeras, NM 87059

Tel: (505) 281-3304
Fax: (505) 281-1176



CREST ASPEN REGENERATION PRESCRIBED BURN

Tijeras, NM –May 5, 2003 - The Sandia Ranger District will be conducting a prescribed burn in the 10K trail head area which is located approximately one half mile east of the Sandia Crest Overlook. The Crest Aspen Burn will cover approximately 30 acres. The burn is located at a very high altitude of 10,000 feet. Approximately 60 percent of the area is covered in snow. The tentative start date will be early Tuesday afternoon May 6th. The Mt. Taylor Hot Shots, two New Mexico State Forestry Inmate Crews along with engines from the Sandia Ranger District and Bernalillo County will be on site.

The primary project objectives are to help restore aspens stands to the forest and improve wildlife habitat. The area has previously been thinned, and the remaining slash on the ground needs to be burned in order to stimulate aspen regeneration.

This project is a continuation of the successful prescribed burn program on the Sandia Ranger District. The burning helps us decrease the accumulation of vegetation thus minimizing the risk of a catastrophic wildfire in the neighboring communities and improve forest health and wildlife habitat. Over 40 percent of the aspen stands in the Southwest have been lost in the last forty years due to absence of fire and decline in forest health. Aspen forests provide important ground, cavity and tree nest areas for many species. Because they are relatively open, aspen stands provide unique recreation and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Smoke will be visible from Albuquerque and the East Mountain area. There will be little if any impact to the neighboring communities. Fire personnel will be on site during the prescribed burn, and will be monitoring the burn daily until it is complete.

We appreciate the community's support during these prescribed burning projects. Comments and questions are welcomed. If you are interested in being placed on an email notification list for prescribed burning, please notify the Sandia Ranger Station 505-281-3304.